THE MAXX

ARKHAM DREAMS

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TEEN +

ISSUE 5

DC

DW

ARKHAM DREAMS

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WITNESS THE DESPAIR AND SUFFERING THE GREEN CLOUDS FOREWARN US OF.

THAT'S A LITTLE MELODRAMATIC, EVEN FOR YOU.

BUT IT'S TRUE! WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE'S OUTBACKS MAY BE POISONED AS A RESULT.

GEE, LOOKS LIKE I CAME BACK AT JUST THE RIGHT—OOPS, GOTTA RUN. BYE.

DAMN—SHE'S DISAPPEARED AGAIN!

NEVER MIND HER, MR. GONE'S BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY THE GREEN CLOUDS TOO.

MAYBE IF WE REMAIN PERFECTLY MOTIONLESS, THEY WON'T ATTACK.

NO, THEY'RE ALMOST UPON US. I WON'T LIE, MAXX...

...THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

MAXX, TELL ME ONE THING... IF SOMEONE PERISHES IN THE OUTBACK...

...DOES THAT PERSON DIE IN THE REAL WORLD?

DUNNO. IN THE JUNGLE QUEEN'S OUTBACK, THE DARK-HAIRED JUNGLE QUEEN REPRESENTS A SICKNESS TO THE LAND, BUT WE DON'T KNOW YET WHOSE OUTBACK THIS IS. ONLY THING WE DO KNOW IS--

--IF WE DO NOTHING--

--ODDS ARE, SOMEONE--YOU, ME, JULIE--EVEN A PRISONER WIRED UP IN ARKHAM'S BASEMENT--

--WILL DIE.

I BET IT'S DELICIOUS IRONY FOR BATMAN TO FIGHT OFF THIS CLOUDY INFECTION, EVEN IF IT SAVES HIS GREATEST NEMESIS' LIFE.

TRUE. I WOULDN'T TAKE YOUR LIFE, JOKER...

...THOUGH I MAY BEAT YOU TO A LIVING PULP IN THE MEANTIME.

KEEP FIGHTING, MAXX, IT'S WORKING, THEY'RE DISSOLVING BACK INTO THE CLOUDS!

OH. GOOD.

THOUGHT I WAS JUST SEEING THINGS AGAIN.

IT'S NOT THEIR ANGER, IT'S THE RAGING FEAR WHICH CREATES THEIR VULNERABILITY, WHICH--

--MAKES THEM POP SO EASILY?

POP

SPLAT

IT'S NO USE, THERE'RE TOO MANY, THEIR FACES KEEP MORPHING BACK UP, CHANGING!

NO, KEEP FIGHTING, MAXX! IT MAY NOT EVEN BE THE JOKER WE'RE SAVING...

SQUISH

POOR LITTLE MAXX, SAVING SOMEONE WHO'LL LAUGH YOU RIGHT INTO YOUR OWN GRAVE?

JUST GIVE UP, YOU BIG WUSS!

YOU KNOW HE'S RIGHT...

...JUST GIVE UP.

MAXX, SNAP OUT OF IT, DON'T LISTEN TO THEM...

...THEY'RE JUST TAPPING INTO OUR OWN WORST FEARS.

KEEP POPPING THE CLOUDS, WE'RE NEARLY THERE.

POP

SHUT UP, YOU LYING LITTLE BALLOONS! THEY NEED TO BE SPIRITED AWAY. WHAT DO YOU SAY NOW, MR. GREEN-JEANS?

YOU MISSED ONE.

THERE. GOT YA.

AND ANOTHER ONE DOWN. SHUT YER STUPID YAP.

POP

POP

MIDNIGHT, ARKHAM BASEMENT.

OKAY, HOW DID I WIND UP BACK HERE AGAIN?

ARRRGGGGGGGG

YOU AGAIN, DISPARU! I SURMISED ALL THIS COULDN'T BE REAL, MUST BE HAPPENING IN SOMEONE'S OUTBACK.

HOW ELSE COULD MAXX ESCAPE ARKHAM, RUN PAST THE GUARDS?

TRUE. IN THIS REALITY, NONE OF ARKHAM'S INMATES--OR YOU--EVER PHYSICALLY LEFT THIS BASEMENT, OR THEIR CELLS!

EXCEPT, IN REAL LIFE, THE JOKER WAS SO HELPFUL IN DUMPING THOSE GREEN CONTAINERS OF TOXINS OFF THE BALLOON AND INTO THE BAY.

THEY'RE THE REAL-WORLD EQUIVALENT TO THE GREEN STORM DEVOURING THE OUTBACK.

AFTER ALL, THE WORD "DISPARU" IN FRENCH...

...DOES MEAN "GONE."

AND I THOUGHT MAXX WAS A DIM BULB.

HEY, I'M RIGHT HERE, YA KNOW!

OBVIOUSLY, YOU IDIOT. DO YOU THINK I'D WALLOW IN ALL THIS EXPOSITION FOR THE SHEER PLEASURE OF IT?

GONE'S STALLING, SIZING US UP.

MUST BREAK FREE OF THESE SHACKLES BEFORE--

RRRIPP

SNAP

SSSSNAP

YOU CAN'T KILL ME, NOT IN THIS OR ANY DIMENSION.

A PORTAL?

MAXX, CAN WE TRUST HER?

AT THIS POINT, I DON'T SEE...

FOLLOW MY VOICE. QUICK--JUMP THROUGH!

...WHAT OTHER CHOICE WE HAVE?

WE MUST PROTECT THE JUNGLE QUEEN'S DAMAGED OUTBACK, WHOEVER IT BELONGS TO.

PLOP

Dark Queen

MAXX, REMIND ME AGAIN—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DARK JUNGLE QUEEN AND THE BLONDE JUNGLE QUEEN?

BLONDIE POPS IN AND OUT A LOT MORE.

THE ROOTS OF MY FOLLICLES HAVE TURNED DARK FROM THE DISEASED OUTBACK.

PLUS, SHE'S A LOT GOTH-IER. BARREL OF LAUGHS, SHE IS.

IGNORE GONE— HIS WORDS DON'T MATTER NOW.

SEE? I TOLD YOU. OUTSIDE OF BEING A MURDERING CREEP, I'M REALLY NOT THAT BAD.

THE RIDDLER IS A GUY AFTER MY OWN HEART--THOUGH I SPEAK IN CODES, LIKE MOTHER NATURE AND THE OUTBACK.

HIS WORDS DON'T MATTER. IT'S ALL TOO LATE.

...NOTHING TO KILL THE PARTY LIKE A GRUMPY DARK JUNGLE QUEEN. OUTBACK'S PRECIOUS JUNGLE QUEEN.

ANOTHER CLUE: NOTICE THOSE SKINNY VINES REACHING UP FROM THE BARREN EARTH? THE DARK GREEN STORM HAS UNGROUNDED THE QUEEN'S STONE FORTRESS.

IT'S UN-MOORED.

WHAT DOES UN-MOORED MEAN?

THINK OF THE HEALTHY JUNGLE QUEEN'S ROCK FORTRESS AS A BOAT, BUT THE DARK MEANS THE FORTRESS IS FLOATING AWAY, IT HAS LOST ITS SAFE HARBOR.

SORTA LIKE HOW YOU USUALLY ARE-- CONFUSED AND MENTALLY LOST AT SEA.

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOUR LIES, GONE? YOU'RE EVIL AND UNCOUTH.

PICKY, PICKY. NOBODY'S PERFECT, MAXX. THIS JUNGLE QUEEN'S REAL-WORLD COUNTERPART IS IN DANGER OF LOSING YOU, TOO.

YOUR OUTBACK ROCK IS FLOATING AWAY, AND IN THE OTHER WORLD, YOU'RE IN DANGER OF DYING.

BATMAN, WHERE ARE YOU IN ALL THIS?

DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT GONE SAYS?

I CAN'T SAY, MAXX...

...THE OUTBACK IS YOUR WORLD, NOT MINE.

MR. GONE, WARNINGS ASIDE, THIS OUTBACK WORLD APPEARS TO BE EMPTY AND DYING.

THESE VINES SEEM TO BE EMITTING A WARM GREEN LIGHT. OPPOSITE OF THE GREEN STORM CLOUDS.

MAYBE IF WE CAN LASSO SOME OF THE LOOSER DANGLING VINES, WE CAN...?

EXACTLY-- SLOWLY PULL IT DOWN LIKE A FLOATING BOAT.

OOPS. EASY DOES IT.

THIS "FLOATING ROCK AS LOST BOAT" METAPHOR HAS ME HOPELESSLY CONFUSED.

SIGH... WELCOME TO MY WORLD.

ALMOST THERE, BUT I STILL WONDER WHAT HAPPENS ONCE WE LAND THIS THING?

THE JUNGLE QUEEN ONCE TOLD ME...

...OUR OUTBACK ISN'T JUST A SUBCONSCIOUS JUNK HEAP...

AIR TURTLES LAY EGGS IN CLOUDS

"I CAN SEE SOMETHING UP IN THOSE CLOUDS ABOVE.

"I REMEMBER SOMETHING THE SKULL JUNGLE QUEEN TOLD ME, ABOUT THE AIR TURTLES BEING THE KEY."

"...IT'S A PLACE OF NATURE, OF NOURISHMENT...

"...OF FERTILITY..."

"...AND OF HOPE."

THUMP

WHOA... WHERE AM I?

MAXX-- YOU PASSED OUT...

SOME VIRAL INFECTION, LOTTA YUCKY GREEN BACTERIA THE DOCTOR SCRAPED OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM.

GEE, IF I KNEW I WAS SO SICK, I'D HAVE BEEN MORE WORRIED.

DON'T FEAR THE "MUFFIN TOP."

THERE'RE A LOT OF WAYS TO BE LOST. YOU REMEMBER IN COLLEGE, A GIRL WHO HAD A GREAT PAIN DEEP INSIDE OF HER OUTBACK.

SO DEEP WAS HER GRIEF THAT SHE FOUND SOMEONE TO BECOME HER SPIRIT ANIMAL, TO PROTECT HERSELF AND THOSE SHE LOVES.

TO PROTECT HIMSELF TOO. YEAH, I REMEMBER.

BUT MY QUESTION IS...

EGGS FALL TO EARTH

BROKEN EGGS FEED SOIL

GUESS WHO?

...WHOSE OUTBACK DID I MANAGE TO SAVE, THEN?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

MINE?

WHO ELSE?

WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF EACH OF OUR OUTBACKS WOUND UP HOPELESSLY TANGLED UP WITH EACH OTHER'S AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

IT REALLY SHOOK ME UP SEEING YOU IN THE HOSPITAL LIKE THAT, MAXX. NOW IT'S *MY* TURN TO ASK... PROMISE NOT TO LEAVE ME, MAXX?

MAXX... ARE YOU LISTENING?

SNOOOOOORE.

"BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, WHILE BECOMING MY PROTECTIVE SPIRIT ANIMAL, I'M AFRAID YOU MIGHT HAVE LOST SOMETHING.

"COMPROMISED YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM... OR OUTBACK?

"...SOMETHING. I DUNNO.

"POINT IS, WHATEVER'S HAPPENING IN YOUR OUTBACK..."

"...YOU'RE OUT OF HARM'S WAY."

SEE FOR YOURSELF, MAXX: THE POISON'S PURGED, THE LAND'S HEALED, AND YOUR OUTBACK'S REJUVENATED.

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW PULLING THE FORTRESS BACK TO THE EARTH STOPPED THE GREEN STORM, AND SUDDENLY FIXED EVERYTHING?

BECAUSE AFTER THAT, THE AIR-TURTLE'S FALLEN EGGSHELLS HELPED FERTILIZE THE BARREN EARTH, WHICH ALSO CAUSED NEW SEEDS IN THE FIELDS TO SPROUT.

...AND THE ISZ SPROUTED UP TO FEED ON THE FIELDS, MEANING...

BATMAN THE MAXX

...The ISZ ARE HERE BACK!

END.

COVER A BY SAM KIETH | COLORS BY RONDA PATTISON

COVER B BY SAM KIETH | COLORS BY RONDA PATTISON

COVER RI BY SAM KIETH & JONATHAN WAY$HAK